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Environment and sustainable development: implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa

Report of the Second Committee*

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I. Introduction

1. The Second Committee held a substantive debate on agenda item 98 (see A/56/561, para. 2). Action on sub-item 98 (c) was taken at the 25th and 40th meetings, on 6 November and 12 December 2001. An account of the Committee's consideration of the sub-item is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.2/56/SR.25 and 40).

II. Consideration of draft resolutions A/C.2/56/L.17/Rev.1 and A/C.2/55/L.70

2. At the 25th meeting, on 6 November, the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa" (A/C.2/56/L.17/Rev.1), which read:

> "*The General Assembly*,
>
> "*Recalling* its resolution 55/204 of 20 December 2000 and other relevant resolutions relating to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa,

* The report of the Committee on this item will be issued in nine parts, under the symbol A/56/561 and Add.1-8.

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"*Noting with satisfaction* that, as indicated in paragraph 1 of its resolution 55/204, the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention was held in Bonn from 11 to 22 December 2000,

"*Expressing its deep appreciation* to the Government of Germany for the generous manner in which it hosted and provided facilities for the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties,

"*Noting with satisfaction* that the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention was held at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 1 to 12 October 2001,

"*Expressing its deep appreciation* to the Government of Switzerland for the organization of the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties as well as its special events,

"*Welcoming* the strong appeal made to the Global Environment Facility Council by the President of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly urging the international community to designate the Facility as the financial mechanism of the Convention,

"*Also welcoming* the insistent call made by the Secretary-General for the Convention to be provided with a financial mechanism similar to the one that the international community has identified for its two sister Conventions, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity, and also for the new Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants,

"*Further welcoming* the decision taken by the Council of the Facility at its May 2001 session related to the designation of land degradation (desertification and deforestation) as a focal area of the Facility as a means of enhancing its support for the successful implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa,

"*Acknowledging* that desertification and drought are problems of a global dimension in that they affect all regions of the world, and that joint actions of the international community are needed to combat desertification and/or mitigate the effects of drought, including the integration of strategies for poverty eradication,

"1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;

"2. *Welcomes* the outcome of the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, in particular the adoption of the Declaration on the Commitments to Enhance the Implementation of the Obligations under the Convention;

"3. *Also welcomes* the outcome of the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention;

"4. *Notes with satisfaction* the establishment of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention as a subsidiary body of the Conference of the Parties, and invites Parties and other actors to participate in

the first session of the Committee, which shall be held from 18 to 29 November 2002, in accordance with Conference of the Parties decision 2/COP.5 of 12 October 2001;

"5. *Invites* the next Assembly of the Global Environment Facility, to be held in October 2002 in Beijing, to designate desertification as a focal area of the Facility and to identify the Facility as the principal financial mechanism for the implementation of the Convention;

"6. *Welcomes* the establishment by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat and the secretariat of the Convention of the Panel of Eminent Personalities to consider the effective and timely implementation of the Convention, and invites the co-organizers of the Panel to transmit the outcome of its work to the preparatory process of the World Summit on Sustainable Development;

"7. *Invites* the World Summit on Sustainable Development to take into account, in the course of its deliberations during the preparatory process and the Summit itself, the challenges of and opportunities in combating desertification, controlling land degradation and mitigating the effects of drought in affected developing countries, including those relating to financial resources and achieving sustainable development, taking into consideration the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities;

"8. *Notes with appreciation* that some affected developing countries have adopted their national, subregional and regional action programmes, and therefore calls upon the international community to contribute to the implementation of those programmes through, inter alia, the conclusion of partnership agreements, through bilateral and multilateral cooperation programmes that are available to implement the Convention and contributions from non-governmental organizations and the private sector;

"9. *Notes with satisfaction* the steps being taken by affected developing country parties to the Convention, with the assistance of international organizations and bilateral development partners, to implement the Convention, and the efforts being made to promote the participation of all actors of civil society in the elaboration and implementation of national action programmes to combat desertification, and in this regard encourages countries to cooperate at the subregional and regional levels, as appropriate;

"10. *Calls upon* Governments, multilateral financial institutions, regional development banks, regional economic integration organizations and all other interested organizations, as well as non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to contribute generously to the General Fund, the Supplementary Fund and the Special Fund, in accordance with the relevant paragraphs of the financial rules of the Conference of the Parties;

"11. *Decides* to include in the calendar of conferences and meetings for the biennium 2002-2003 the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies, including the sixth ordinary session of the Conference of the Parties and meetings of its subsidiary bodies;

"12. *Requests* the United Nations Development Programme to implement decision 2000/23 of 29 September 2000 of its Executive Board

pertaining to the cooperation between the Programme and the secretariat of the Convention;

"13. *Approves* the continuation of the current institutional linkage and related administrative arrangements between the United Nations Secretariat and the permanent secretariat of the Convention for a further five-year period, to be reviewed by the General Assembly and the Conference of the Parties not later than 31 December 2006;

"14. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session on the implementation of the present resolution;

"15. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-seventh session the sub-item entitled 'Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa'."

3. At its 40th meeting, on 12 December, the Committee had before it a statement on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.17/Rev.1, submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly (A/C.2/56/L.51).

4. At the same meeting, the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Dharmansjah Djumala (Indonesia), introduced a draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa" (A/C.2/56/L.70), which he submitted on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.17/Rev.1.

5. Also at the same meeting, the Secretary of the Committee informed the Committee that the statement of programme budget implications contained in document A/C.2/56/L.51 applied equally to draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.70 (see A/C.2/56/SR.40).

6. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.70 (see para. 9).

7. Before the adoption of the draft resolution, the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran made a statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China (see A/C.2/56/SR.40). After the adoption of the draft resolution, statements were made by the representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China) and Nigeria (see A/C.2/56/SR.40).

8. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.70, draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.17/Rev.1 was withdrawn by its sponsors.

III. Recommendation of the Second Committee

9. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 55/204 of 20 December 2000 and other relevant resolutions relating to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa,[1]

Expressing its deep appreciation to the Government of Germany for the generous manner in which it hosted and provided facilities for the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties,

Noting with satisfaction that the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention was held at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 1 to 12 October 2001,

Expressing its deep appreciation to the Government of Switzerland for the organization of the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties and its special events in Geneva,

Welcoming the decision taken by the Council of the Global Environment Facility at its May 2001 session to pursue the designation of land degradation (desertification and deforestation) as a focal area of the Facility, as a means of enhancing its support for the successful implementation of the Convention,

Acknowledging that desertification and drought are problems of a global dimension in that they affect all regions of the world, and that joint actions of the international community are needed to combat desertification and/or mitigate the effects of drought, including the integration of strategies for poverty eradication,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;[2]

2. *Welcomes* the outcome of the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, in particular the adoption of the Declaration on the Commitments to Enhance the Implementation of the Obligations under the Convention;

3. *Also welcomes* the outcome of the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention;

4. *Notes* the establishment of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention as a subsidiary body of the Conference of the Parties, and invites Parties and other actors to participate in the first session of the Committee, which shall be held from 18 to 29 November 2002, in accordance with Conference of the Parties decision 2/COP.5 of 12 October 2001;

5. *Also notes* that the mandate and functions of the Committee shall be subject to renewal at the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties, in the light of lessons learned during the overall review of the Committee;

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[1] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1954, No. 33480.

[2] A/56/175.

6. *Encourages* the Conferences of the Parties to and the secretariats of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,[3] the Convention on Biological Diversity,[4] the Convention to Combat Desertification and other international instruments related to environment and sustainable development, as well as relevant organizations, especially the United Nations Environment Programme, with, as appropriate, the involvement of the Environmental Management Group, to continue their work towards enhancing complementarities among them, with full respect for the status of the secretariats of the conventions and the autonomous decision-making prerogatives of the conferences of the parties to the conventions concerned, to strengthen cooperation with a view to facilitating progress in the implementation of those conventions at the international, regional and national levels and to report thereon to their respective conferences of the parties;

7. *Welcomes* the decision of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to Combat Desertification to submit to the preparatory process of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, as inputs, the Chairman's summary of the ministerial and high-level interactive dialogue sessions held at the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties, which includes the challenges of and opportunities in combating desertification, controlling land degradation and mitigating the effects of drought in affected developing countries, including those relating to financial resources and achieving sustainable development, and the comprehensive report of the ad hoc working group for the in-depth review and analysis of reports submitted at the third and fourth sessions of the Conference of the Parties;

8. *Also welcomes* the decision of the Council of the Global Environment Facility, under agenda item 7 of its meeting in December 2001, to consider at its next meeting proposed amendments to the instrument to designate land degradation, primarily desertification and deforestation, as a focal area of the Facility, as a means of enhancing its support for the successful implementation of the Convention with a view to the Council recommending approval of such amendments by the Assembly of States participating in the Facility at its meeting in October 2002;

9. *Encourages* the Conference of the Parties and the Council and Assembly of the Global Environment Facility to work cooperatively and effectively to facilitate the financing of the full implementation of the Convention by the Facility to achieve the objectives of the Convention in the area of land degradation, primarily desertification and deforestation;

10. *Notes with appreciation* that some affected developing countries have adopted their national, subregional and regional action programmes, and urges affected developing countries that have not yet done so to accelerate the process of elaboration and adoption of their action programmes with a view to finalizing them as soon as possible;

11. *Calls upon* the international community to contribute to the implementation of those programmes through, inter alia, the conclusion of partnership agreements, and through the bilateral and multilateral cooperation programmes that are available to implement the Convention, including contributions

[3] FCCC/CP/1997/7/Add.1.

[4] See United Nations Environment Programme, *Convention on Biological Diversity* (Environmental Law and Institution Programme Activity Centre), June 1992.

from non-governmental organizations and the private sector, and to support the efforts of the developing countries to implement the Convention;

12. *Invites* affected developing countries to place the implementation of their action programmes to combat desertification high among their priorities in their dialogue with their development partners;

13. *Notes with satisfaction* the steps being taken by affected developing countries that are parties to the Convention, with the assistance of international organizations and bilateral development partners, to implement the Convention, and the efforts being made to promote the participation of all actors of civil society in the elaboration and implementation of national action programmes to combat desertification, and in that regard encourages countries to cooperate at the subregional and regional levels, as appropriate;

14. *Welcomes* the strengthened cooperation between the secretariat of the Convention and the Global Mechanism, and encourages further efforts in that regard for the effective implementation of the Convention;

15. *Invites* all Parties to pay promptly and in full the contributions required for the core budget of the Convention for the biennium 2002-2003, and urges all Parties that have not yet paid their contributions for the year 1999 and/or the biennium 2000-2001 to do so as soon as possible in order to ensure continuity in the cash flow required to finance the ongoing work of the Conference of the Parties, the secretariat and the Global Mechanism;

16. *Calls upon* Governments, multilateral financial institutions, regional development banks, regional economic integration organizations and all other interested organizations, as well as non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to contribute generously to the General Fund, the Supplementary Fund and the Special Fund, in accordance with the relevant paragraphs of the financial rules of the Conference of the Parties, and welcomes the financial support already provided by some countries;

17. *Decides* to include in the calendar of conferences and meetings for the biennium 2002-2003 the sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies, including the sixth ordinary session of the Conference of the Parties and the meetings of its subsidiary bodies;

18. *Encourages* the United Nations Development Programme to continue implementing decision 2000/23 of 29 September 2000 of its Executive Board pertaining to the cooperation between the secretariat of the Convention and the United Nations Development Programme in order to mainstream activities to combat desertification at the national, subregional and regional levels;[5]

19. *Approves* the continuation of the current institutional linkage, and related administrative arrangements between the United Nations Secretariat and the secretariat of the Convention for a further five-year period, to be reviewed by the General Assembly and the Conference of the Parties not later than 31 December 2006;

[5] See DP/2000/1, para. 231.

20. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session on the implementation of the present resolution;

21. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-seventh session the sub-item entitled "Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa".